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AOL INHALES NETSCAPE, Deals with SUN!
MS URGES GOV'T TO DROP DOJ CASE
MS to CHARGE Annual License FEES??

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Toad Hall BBS 1-978-670-5896

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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

From the Editor’s Desk...

Now that I’m as stuffed as the Turkeys were, I can relax and tell you about the "Head Power Broker" in the wonderful world of Republicans. George H. Bush is at it again. You can expect to see good old George do just about everything conceivable that is legal to help get his son George nominated by the Republican Party and then elected as President of the USA in the year 2000. What you really have to worry about is what you cannot see being done to get this Bush into the Whitehouse. The next few years are bound to be some very interesting times in certain political circles. That "Crystal Ball" of STReport’s is heating up. In fact we see one image in it very clearly. Its that of none other than our current Vice President, Al Gore. Gore will definitely be kept "on his toes" for the remainder of the current Administration. In fact he had better brace himself for all sorts of accusations and innuendo. Standing slightly to left and rear of Gore is Ken Starr. He is headed for some very rough times.

On the computing front, MS is going to do ok with the Government. Now AOL

has proven all of MS's allegations relative to keen and persuasive competition, we'll now begin to see a "mellowing" of this anti-trust fever. Can you believe Japan opened her YAP against MS's competitive practices?? Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. This is a case of the POT calling the entire Stove names! Japan has given the word competition an entirely new meaning... from "factory dump" to "artificial shortages" (remember the Dram factory fire? - Does that thing burn down once or twice a year?) Japan ought to shut up and stop trying to "butterup" the US Gov't in a poorly veiled attempt at goodwill for positive US financing considerations. Talk about cornball politics... that has to be the "Lotus" of Lotuses.

Ralph

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STReport Headline News
LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

Weekly Happenings in the Computer World
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

AOL, Netscape Agree To $4.2 Billion Deal

Internet media power America Online has agreed to acquire cyberspace software pioneer Netscape Communications in a deal valued at $4.2 billion, the companies said today.

The pact calls for Netscape shareholders to receive 0.45 share of AOL common stock for each share of Netscape. The deal is expected to close next spring and be slightly accretive to operating earnings, the companies said. AOL also said it had reached a definitive, three-year deal with Sun Microsystems Inc. to develop and market electronic commerce software systems that make it easy for companies to set up shop on the Internet.

Terms of this second deal call for Sun to become a lead computer systems and service provider to AOL, with AOL committed to buying $500 million worth of Sun hardware and services at list prices through the year 2002, for its own use and the use of its electronic commerce partners. In return, AOL will receive more than $350 million in licensing, marketing and advertising fees from Sun, plus significant minimum revenue commitments, over the next three years.

AOL said Jim Barksdale, Netscape president and chief executive, will join AOL’s board of directors after the merger with Netscape closes. The statement announcing the deal gave no details of Netscape’s management structure following the merger or the impact of the deal on Netscape’s workforce.

The merger pact calls for 0.45 AOL share to be exchanged for each Netscape share, the companies said. Based on AOL’s last trade of $89.25 Monday in composite New York Stock Exchange trading, Netscape shares would be valued under the deal at $40.1625, below their Nasdaq closing price of $41.94 Monday. In early Instinet trade Tuesday, Netscape fell to $40.25, AOL climbed to $90.75, and Sun firmed to $72.50, up from its Monday close at $71.31.

No Antitrust Hurdles Seen In a Netscape-AOL Deal

U.S. antitrust authorities would almost certainly give the green light to Internet superpower America Online Inc.’s deal o acquire Netscape Communications Corp., experts said.

At most, the Federal Trade Commission or Justice Department -- it is not clear which antitrust authority would consider such a transaction -- might require some minor adjustments in a deal, the experts said.

AOL, the world’s largest online service provider, today confirmed an agreement to takeover the Internet browser pioneer in a deal that could be valued at about $4 billion.

An agreement to combine two of Microsoft Corp.’s fiercest competitors might also involve Internet computer provider Sun Microsystems Inc., a third archrival of the world’s leading software company. AOL said it was in talks with Sun to develop and market Netscape products.

‘‘I do not think the government will have any problems with this deal,’’ said Michael Cooper, an antitrust lawyer with Bryan Cave of Washington. ‘‘AOL doesn’t have a monopoly on the Internet -- it’s not even close. You think a merger is going to put Yahoo out of business?’’

Yahoo, like Mountain View, Calif.-based Netscape, provides a ‘‘home page’’ or ‘‘portal’’ that gives World Wide Web users easy access to news and other information.

James Love of the Consumer Project on Technology expressed some misgivings about the deal. He said it was evidence that Microsoft Corp., which offers its own browser, had damaged Netscape through unfair competition, making it impossible for the Internet firm to survive on its own.

‘‘It’s evidence that Microsoft has basically made it impossible for Netscape to survive as a stand-alone company,’’ said Love, who works with consumer advocate Ralph Nader on high technology issues. ‘‘I actually do find it objectionable.

‘‘I think it’s a real shame that the two major browsers will be controlled by companies whose major mission in life is to bombard consumers with advertisements and steer them toward their partners in electronic commerce,’’ Love said.

Netscape has made its highly valuable proprietary ‘‘source code’’ available to the public and gives away its browser. The source code allows people to make improvements in the system.

It has also made versions of the browser that run on many operating systems, including Linux, which some technically adept people use as an alternative to Microsoft’s Windows operating system.

Love said he hoped that support for other browsers would continue if Netscape is acquired and that the source code would remain open.

Bob Skitol, an antitrust attorney with Drinker, Biddle & Reath, said that he thought the transaction would ultimately win approval after what is likely to be a close look by authorities.

‘‘But I think the parties will have a strong story to tell about the pro-competitive aspects of the deal,’’ he said.

Gordon Spivack of Coudert Brothers in New York agreed that the deal could

help create a strong rival to Microsoft in the development of the Internet.

After Netscape, AOL May Ask What’s Left to Own?

America Online Inc.’s talks to buy Netscape Communications Corp. reflect the unbridled ambitions of the world’s No. 1 supplier of Internet access and programming to charge into the lead of every major consumer category yet conceived on the emerging Internet medium.

‘‘AOL Anywhere’’ is the name for the multi-brand strategy the company has pursued in one form or another since its founding in 1985 by Steve Case, now chairman and chief executive, as an online chat system for Apple computer users.

AOL’s move to acquire Netscape, which is expected to carry some premium to Netscape’s $4 billion market capitalisation, is expected to be announced as early as Monday, although no final deal had been reached, sources said late Sunday.

The merger, if completed, would reportedly give America Online control of Netscape’s popular browser software and its busy Netcenter Web site, reinforcing AOL in its battle with rival Web-based services like Yahoo and Microsoft Corp.’s MSN.

Already, AOL claims a majority of the ‘‘eyeballs’’ viewing the Internet -- 14 million subscribers of its flagship AOL service, 21 million users of its recently acquired ICQ Web chat software, and two million CompuServe members are prime examples.

‘‘Our view of this medium has always been pretty broad,’’ Case said in an interview last week at the company’s Dulles, Va. offices. ‘‘These are pieces of a puzzle we are assembling ... When it’s assembled, it’s AOL Anywhere.’’

AOL Anywhere includes plans to extend Internet delivery via television, high-speed Internet access cable TV lines, perhaps even wireless hand-held computers or any other consumer Internet device that develops a wide following, Case said.

‘‘AOL Anywhere is the idea that people do not want a separate service at various places,’’ the AOL chairman said of the mix of routes computer users at home and work that now reach the Web.

With Netscape, it would be doubling down on bets that have already made AOL No. 1 or No. 2 on virtually every avenue through which consumers experience the Internet as it grows with the audience to become a wide-spectrum media company.

The Netscape brand, browser and Netcenter site would boost AOL’s Internet presence in areas where rivals like like Yahoo Inc., with its broad menu of Internet services, and Microsoft’s HotMail free electronic mail service, now have an edge.

Ted Leonsis, head of AOL Studios and the man in charge of developing new programming outlets, boasts that the company has become expert in cross-promoting its various brands.

‘‘We’ve learned to use the toggling of eyeballs really well,’’ he said of how Internet users can now find links to AOL properties after every blink.

AOL is positioning itself to reap what its officials see as a mother lode of riches to be staked out by and won by controlling the avenues of electronic commerce and advertising, which they compare to the early days of radio and TV.

‘‘We think scale is everything,’’ Leonsis said ahead of the reported takeover talks. ‘‘We are able to cross the chasm now.’’

Often equated with simply its 14 million member flagship AOL Internet access and programming service, America Online has been on a campaign in the last year to extend its appeal beyond those satisfied with the core AOL service.

Less understood, but playing an increasingly important role in America Online’s strategy, is ICQ, the Internet chat system that it acquired earlier this year and which has attracted more than 21 million sign-ups.

AOL has so far kept its distance from ICQ, hoping to preserve the free-wheeling atmosphere of ICQ’s youthful and Web- savvy audience from the mainstream, family-oriented focus of the core America Online service, Leonsis said.

Among local viewers, AOL’s Digital City metropolitan guides offer news, weather and sports in 58 North American cites and is set to expand to overseas capitals next year. Its reach is several times that of Microsoft’s Sidewalk.com and USA Network Inc.’s CitySearch.

AOL International extends what officials refer to as ‘‘AOL’s secret sauce’’ to separate national services the company has set up in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden, Japan, Australia and will open soon in Hong Kong.

In a side deal to the anticipated merger, Sun Microsystems Inc. would partner with the Netscape to distribute its business software that runs and manages computers that power Web sites.

Sun Ruling May Boost U.S. Case Against Microsoft

A U.S. government lawyer said a California judge’s ruling against Microsoft Corp. bolstered the government’s antitrust case against the software giant, but Microsoft sought to play the ruling down.

‘‘Once you see the importance of the issue, then the fact of that decision obviously helps our case,’’ government lawyer David Boies said at a news conference in Washington.

On Tuesday, a federal judge in San Jose, Calif., backed claims by Sun Microsystems Inc. that Microsoft had ‘‘polluted’’ its Java programming language, which is provided with Microsoft’s Windows 98 system.

Boies said the significance of the Sun ruling was underscored when a Microsoft lawyer raised issues from that case during cross-examination of an IBM executive on Wednesday.

However, Boies said that the effect of the ruling would depend on Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, who is presiding over Microsoft’s antitrust trial in Washington. The federal government and 20 states have charged Microsoft competed illegally against Netscape Communications Corp. in a bid to dominate market for software for browsing the Web.

Microsoft associate general counsel Tom Burt said the California ruling would not affect the antitrust trial.

‘‘The ruling is a narrow ruling and that actually will have very little implications on the case here in Washington, D.C.,’’ Burt said.

Burt and Boies both spoke at a news conference on the sidelines of the antitrust trial in Washington.

U.S. District Judge Ronald Whyte’s preliminary injunction requires that Microsoft alter its Java software within 90 days to comply with Sun compatibility tests or pull it from the market.

Software makers had to write to Microsoft’s version of Java or wind up with software that ran sluggishly on Windows, Sun said.

But writing to Microsoft’s specifications prevented the software from running on other systems, defeating the goal of Java to run on any kind of computer, Sun alleged.

Microsoft Urges Government to Drop Antitrust Case

Microsoft’s top lawyer called on the government to drop its antitrust case in light of America Online’s agreement to purchase Netscape, and will later seek a dismissal from the judge.

Microsoft general counsel William Neukom said the deal showed that a dynamic market had made the case against Microsoft Corp. irrelevant and that the government was ‘‘five steps behind the industry.’’

‘‘The government ought to drop this case,’’ Neukom told reporters on the steps of the courthouse.

But Neukom and Microsoft’s lead litigator, John Warden, said they cannot yet ask District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson to halt the trial and dismiss the case. But when the government witnesses have finished testifying -- the trial is hearing from the seventh of 12 slated to appear -- Microsoft will ask the judge to dismiss the case.

On the front steps of the courthouse, government litigator David Boies said the merger would not affect the outcome of the trial, but he could not rule out the possibility that there might be an effect on the remedies that the judge would apply.

‘‘I can’t say it would have no effect. It is unlikely to have a significant effect,’’ he told reporters.

Boies said that ‘‘to the extent that this is a factor in the industry, that would be something the court would take into account.’’

Microsoft has been on trial for six weeks on charges brought by the

federal government and 20 states that it used its monopoly in computer operating systems to compete unfairly in the market for software used to browse the Internet.

America Online Inc. announced earlier on Tuesday that it would buy Netscape Communications Corp., Microsoft’s rival in the Internet browser market, in a deal worth $4.2 billion.

Under a related three-year deal, Sun Microsystems Inc. -- whose Java Internet programming language is now seen as the greatest threat to Microsoft’s software dominance -- will develop and market electronic commerce software that makes it easy to set up shop in cyberspace.

In court, Microsoft lawyer Michael Lacovara asked a government economic expert, Frederick Warren-Boulton, to reanalyze the case in light of the AOL announcement.

In questioning Warren-Boulton, Lacovara said, incorrectly as it turned out, that Sun ‘‘will make substantial payments to acquire the (Netscape) browser,’’ prompting the judge to question Lacovara’s presentation of the facts.

‘‘Is that question premised on known facts? That Sun will acquire the browser?’’ Jackson asked.

An AOL official said in an interview later that AOL and not Sun will control the Netscape browser.

‘‘Sun has not acquired the browser,’’ George Vradenburg, AOL senior vice president of global and strategic policy, said in an interview. ‘‘Indeed, AOL is going to acquire the Netscape Corp. and acquire the browser.’’

He said that development of the browser would take place at Netscape where he said there was ‘‘a very talented’’ set of people. He said that Sun’s role will be to help develop electronic commerce.

At day’s end, Lacovara said he still needed one more day of cross-examination of Warren-Boulton.

‘‘I am going to hold you’’ to finishing on Monday, said Jackson, when the trial resumes for a seventh week after a recess for Thursday’s Thanksgiving holiday.

Sun Micro’s Java Would Be A Winner In AOL/Netscape Deal

Sun Microsystems Inc. and its Java programming language could be a big winner as America Online Inc. reaches a conclusive deal to buy Internet pioneer Netscape Communications Corp.

Today, America Online said it will buy Netscape in a stock deal valued at about $4 billion, a deal that would pit AOL more directly against Microsoft Corp.

That deal could bring in Sun, which along with Netscape is an avowed enemy of Microsoft and which recently won a court victory for Java in a suit against the software giant.

Dulles, Va.-based AOL said it was in talks with Sun regarding a possible development and marketing agreement for electronic commerce and Internet devices that would involve Netscape products. Sources familiar with the talks said Sun was looking at a marketing or licensing pact.

Analysts speculated that AOL would use Sun’s Java language to create a television set-top box-based version of AOL to compete directly with Microsoft’s WebTV Networks Inc., as part of AOL’s ‘‘AOL Anywhere’’ strategy.

Earlier this year, AOL acquired NetChannel Inc., a fledgling competitor to WebTV based in South San Francisco, in a move to expand its Internet services into television. NetChannel had 10,000 subscribers before it shut down its service due to lack of funds.

‘‘AOL running on a Java screen is the strategy here, whether it is a handheld device, or a pocket computer or a TV or cable set top box,’’ said Richard Doherty, director of the Envisioneering Group, a consulting firm in Seaford, N.Y.

Sun may also market and distribute some of Netscape’s software for the server computers that run networks, but it is most likely looking at Netscape’s electronic commerce software.

‘‘Both companies would like to have the commerce software, so I am guessing that they are negotiating about that,’’ said Eric Brown, a Forrester Research analyst. ‘‘But the opportunity here for Sun is not to pick up a few commerce packages ... but to find a new opportunity for the Java platform.’’

An agreement with AOL, the world’s largest online service, and Netscape would be a huge boost for Sun, which yet to enter the consumer market. It also would be another boon for Java, which had seen its momentum slow in recent months, due to uncertainties because of the lawsuit and some product delays.

Sun recently won a major legal victory for Java -- a popular programming language designed to run on a wide range of computer systems -- in its contract lawsuit against its archrival, Microsoft. That case was closely watched in Washington, where Microsoft’s antitrust trial is taking place.

Last week, a U.S. District Court judge in California ruled that Microsoft must modify its Windows 98 operating system to conform with Sun’s version of Java. Sun sued Microsoft because it had created variants of Java that ran only on Windows, thereby destroying Java’s ‘‘write once, run anywhere,’’ promise.

‘‘That ruling helped open the door wider for Sun having value here,’’ Doherty said of AOL’s acquisition talks.

Yahoo!, Excite, Lycos Primed to Catch AOL-Netscape Consolidation Fever

If one multibillion-dollar Internet deal isn’t enough for you, hang around a while. There could be more.

The $4.2 billion handshake between America Online Inc. and Netscape Communications Corp. will put a lot of pressure on a lot of companies,

most notably the so-called portal sites -- particularly Yahoo! Inc., Excite Inc. and Lycos Inc.

Faced with an online behemoth that has access to 23 million Netizens (14 million from AOL, 9 million from Netscape’s Netcenter), those sites, which depend on clicks for their bread and butter, will be looking to sign deals with companies that can offer the same kind of promotional and monetary backing as AOL.

"Just like we’ve seen in the banking world, this is likely to set off consolidation, either among the portal players or between media partners and portal players," said Scott Smith, director of Internet commerce at Current Analysis in Virginia.

Outright acquisitions were viewed as unlikely by many analysts, who noted the sky-high valuations of the Internet companies.

As of the close of business Monday, Lycos had a market capitalization of $2.7 billion and Excite was worth $2.6 billion -- Yahoo! stood at an almost unbelievable $20.7 billion.

What’s more likely, analysts say, is the companies will partner up with each other or with a major media firm, echoing the relationship between Infoseek Corp. and Disney Co.

But Disney’s not the only media company to get into the Internet market in a big way. General Electric Co.’s NBC division recently acquired part of CNet Inc.’s snap.com portal site.

"I don’t think this will force any mergers, but I’ve felt for a while that Yahoo!, Excite and Lycos could all use major media partners, at a minimum in the same way that Infoseek and Snap have partners," said Adam Schoenfeld, a vice president at Jupiter Communications in New York.

"AOL and Netcenter together have major promotional muscle. The deal-making between those portals could accelerate, and that could potentially involve a major media company trying to buy one of them."

Indeed, several media companies have been rumored to be shopping for some time, including Time Warner Inc., The News Corp. and CBS Corp.

A spokeswoman for Excite said the company was always willing to talk, "and if the right deal came around we would consider it."

But she added that Excite might be the best-positioned of the portal players, since it currently has deals with both AOL and Netscape to provide search services.

"[There is] a long-term concern there, but right off the bat it creates a [fight] between Microsoft and Netscape. That’s really where the head-to-head battle will be," she said.

Others agreed that the deal does present a significant barrier to anyone trying to make a break into the portal market, including Microsoft, which has been slowly pulling together its MSN strategy.

Microsoft Considers Yearly Charge For Windows

An internal Microsoft memo released at the software giant’s antitrust trial shows the company has considered charging an annual fee to computer users for its Windows operating system starting in 2001.

The potentially explosive revelation helps bolster government charges that Microsoft’s monopoly in operating systems harms consumers.

The memo to Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates from a top executive said the proposal to charge consumers annually was ’’the best thing long term’’ and noted: ‘‘We have increased our prices over the last 10 years (while) other component prices have come down and continue to come down.’’

The federal government and 20 states have charged that Microsoft Corp. illegally maintained its monopoly in operating systems and used that monopoly to compete unfairly against Netscape Communications Corp. in the market for Internet browsers.

Joachim Kempin, Microsoft’s senior vice president for sales to personal computer makers, used the three-page memo to lay out a strategy that would preserve the company’s prices even as PC prices plummeted, but he was also concerned the company could go too far and foment a rebellion among computer makers.

The December 1997 memo looked to consumers as a new revenue stream.

Until now, consumers purchasing new computers have gotten the Windows operating system wrapped in, without paying a separate fee.

Kempin’s memo proposed changing that under the heading, ’’License for limited time and create annuity business.’’

‘‘This is the best thing long term but it might disrupt end user operations and could require end user registration,’’ Kempin wrote. Kempin reminded Gates that he had made the suggestion before and added that it needed to be seriously addressed.

Kempin wrote that charging the annual fee was not an option until 2001, when a new version of Windows is expected.

Microsoft spokesman Mark Murray, asked afterward about the memo, said: ‘‘This is not a licensing option that is near reality. It is simply an idea that is thrown out there to look into.’’

The December memo was used by a government economics expert, Fredrick Warren-Boulton, to support his allegation that the software giant had monopoly power and could raise prices far above what it could charge if it had competition.

‘‘I believe Microsoft has raised prices above competitive levels by a significant amount,’’ Warren-Boulton said in court.

Kempin’s memo projected that if the trend toward cheaper computers continued toward the $500 level for Christmas 1998 -- and this month some complete systems are selling for less than $600 -- ‘‘our royalties ... could be as high as 10 percent of total system price.’’ Kempin said that Microsoft must ’’resist ... royalty price decreases firmly’’ for the low-priced machines. He said the company’s goal was to get the ’’highest amount of dollars’’ possible from computer makers for loading Windows on their machines.

But the memo also expressed fear that Microsoft’s high prices might incite action by the nation’s biggest personal computer maker to create a competing operating system.

‘‘Our high prices could get a single OEM (Compaq might pay us $750 million next year) or a coalition to fund a competing effort (say in India),’’ he wrote, referring to personal computer makers as original equipment manufacturers or OEMs.

One place that Kempin looked for a new flow of cash was personal computer owners.

Kempin devoted the last page of his single-spaced memo to concerns about who might be able to derail Microsoft’s plan. Kempin, after considering the threat posed by a coalition of PC makers led by Compaq Computer Corp., dismissed it by saying he doubted they could market the product successfully. Kempin also doubted that computer makers would be willing to sell machines without Windows or another operating system.

Japan FTC: Microsoft Violated Law

Japan’s Fair Trade Commission has ruled that Microsoft Corp. violated the country’s anti-monopoly laws by promoting software in a way that put competitors at a disadvantage, the commission said today.

The trade watchdog issued a warning to Microsoft and its Japanese subsidiary against engaging in unfair business practices following an investigation, which began in January when officials raided the company’s Tokyo offices.

The admonition came as the software giant based in Redmond, Wash., faces anti-trust allegations in a high-profile case in the United States. The Japanese ruling has no bearing on the U.S. case.

The trade commission said Microsoft attempted to unfairly restrict competitors’ access to the market by bundling pre-installed word-processing and spreadsheet software, FTC spokesman Kanichiro Nakanishi said.

Microsoft Co., the wholly owned Japanese subsidiary of Microsoft Corp., issued a statement in Tokyo late today saying it had already voluntarily stopped the practices cited by the FTC and did not anticipate having to make any additional changes in its marketing activities in Japan.

Makoto Naruke, the president of Microsoft Co., said in the statement that he welcomed the conclusion of the FTC’s investigation and was confident that his company had acted in accordance with the law.

A company official speaking on condition of anonymity said Microsoft does not plan to formally protest the ruling.

Brad Smith, general counsel for international affairs at Microsoft’s headquarters, said in Redmond that the ruling in a way was positive for the company because the Japanese FTC decided not to pursue separate allegations involving dominance over Internet services.

Similar allegations are central to the Justice Department’s case against Microsoft.

‘‘It’s certainly ironic that the Japanese government has dropped all of the browser allegations, but our own government is continuing its attack on one of America’s leading exporters,’’ Smith said.

The Justice Department and attorneys general from 20 states allege that Microsoft tried to maintain what they describe as its monopoly power over the software that runs most of the world’s computers and then extend that dominance into new areas, such as the market for Internet software.

Microsoft had contracts in Japan where companies offering Internet access were promoted via a list linked to its Windows software. In return, these service providers had agreed to promote Microsoft’s Internet Explorer browser.

Those contracts were criticized for being exclusionary, and Microsoft modified them earlier this year, the Microsoft lawyer said.

In January, agents from the commission raided Microsoft’s Tokyo offices, confiscating information about Microsoft’s Windows operating system and Internet Explorer browser software. It also collected information about Microsoft’s word processing program Word and spreadsheet Excel.

Microsoft’s Windows operating software controls the basic functions of 85 percent of the world’s personal computers.

Contract Workers Sue Microsoft

A legal battle over whether Microsoft Corp legally can fill its offices with contract workers who are not eligible for company medical benefits or Microsoft contributions to employee savings plans heated up this week with another complaint filed in U.S. District Court here.

Ten current and former contract workers at Microsoft are seeking class-action status to sue Microsoft for ’’misclassifying’’ thousands of on-site workers as ‘‘temporary agency employees’’ and ‘‘independent contractors,’’ despite doing what they say is the same work as Microsoft employees.

The contingent workers, who call themselves ‘‘perma-temps’’, may work full-time for years but do not receive Microsoft benefits, from stock options to paid maternity leave.

The plaintiffs worked at Microsoft for up to five years, at jobs including copy editor, program supervisor, graphic artist and software developer.

The four women and six men said they were required to sign waivers that they actually worked for private employment agencies, even though they had little contact with the agencies other than receiving paychecks.

‘‘It’s particularly galling that some (workers) are paid extremely well and become millionaires and others are not provided medical insurance,’’ said plaintiffs attorney David Stobaugh of Seattle. Any benefits the contract workers receive are provided by the agencies.

‘‘We haven’t seen a copy of the lawsuit and therefore can’t comment,’’ said Microsoft spokeswoman Heidi Rothauser. ’’However, we believe we treat all our regular employees and contingent workers in a fair and equitable manner.’’

The new lawsuit is a broader version of a class-action lawsuit filed by Microsoft contract workers Dec. 29, 1992.

The workers in the new complaint had lost all, or a portion, of their damage claims in July of this year when the earlier lawsuit’s class size was sharply restricted by a U.S. District Court judge.

In that prior suit, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 1997 that Microsoft had wrongly excluded some workers from its corporate Savings Plus Plan. The U.S. District Court in Seattle has asked Microsoft to figure how much plaintiffs are owed under the plan.

The new complaint alleges that Microsoft breached its duty to treat all employees fairly, violated state anti-kickback statutes by requiring plaintiffs to sign waivers that they worked for third-party employment agencies; and illegally denied family and medical leave to ‘‘contract’’ employees.

Stobaugh said about 6,000 workers -- about a third of all on-site employees at Microsoft’s Redmond, Wash., headquarters -- are classified as third-party agency employees.

Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan declined comment on the number of such workers, but said they are used ‘‘to fill in for full-time workers on leave, to help out on special projects or in special situations.... We’re always evaluating our staffing needs.’’

The first Comdex Frozen Turkey awards
PC Week

By Mark Van Name and Bill Catchings, ZDNet

The industry’s biggest gathering, Comdex, is upon us again, and awards are as thick in the air as leaves in October. We’ve had enough of standing on the sidelines as others bestow award after award on deserving products and companies. So we have decided to join the fray and are proud to announce our first annual Comdex Frozen Turkey Awards. These awards, which we determine in a manner we would not reveal even to the DOJ, go this year to those groups that have done the most to slow the progress of electronic commerce on the Web.

Our first winner is IBM for doing one of the best jobs to date of confusing the world about just what the heck e-commerce is anyway. Is it European vineyard owners doing business globally via the Web? Or is it a ThinkPad? The first is clearly a legitimate claim, while the second is just so much ill-conceived marketing hooey. Listen to IBM, though, and you’ll know that both are e-business solutions. Yeah, right.

The award for being slowest to get the point goes to NetGrocer and all the major national grocery chains. NetGrocer wants to sell you only items from a limited selection--an approach that just won’t cut it in today’s gourmet-store world. And the big national chains seem determined to ignore

the obvious service of letting us order from our local stores over the Web and get same-day delivery of fresh goods chosen from the store's full selection. In a business living on single-digit margins, this natural and potentially high-margin (at least for a while) service somehow keeps eluding these stores.

The huge but--fortunately--disorganized group of credit-card fearmongers takes home the prize for spreading sheer FUD. Yes, hackers can snoop messages and steal your credit-card info from sites that are not using secure servers. But let's get real: Every waiter to whom you hand your card has the same opportunity, as does every store clerk and phone-order operator. The credit-card companies offer adequate protection; let's get on with business. (And, no, we're not saying sites shouldn't have secure servers; they should.)

The Fun with Numbers award goes to the prognosticators who can't come up with two consistent numbers in a row to predict anything about the Internet. They see no contradiction in estimating $2 billion in total e-commerce while reporting that Dell alone is selling $6 million a day on the Web. They report numbers of Web hits in excess of the U.S. population. (Did everyone in America really download four copies of the Starr Report?)

Yahoo takes home our Inadvertent Fantasy Creation award for convincing every fool with an Internet-related idea that he or she is going to garner a multibillion-dollar market value overnight. Most startups, Internet or otherwise, will fail, and those that succeed will not be the legitimate giant portal that Yahoo has become.

The Headlines Over Progress award goes to our legislators, state and federal, who are looking to pass laws both to clean up and to tax the Internet. While few of these people have ever bothered to use the Internet, they find themselves eminently qualified to legislate it. Never mind that their intervention has the potential to disrupt the robust computer and Internet economies that are a large part of the current, long-lived, economic boom.

Microsoft naturally wins our overall award for doing the most to slow e-commerce. By aiming to control or directly take over every aspect of the Web, Microsoft is only hurting us all. Give up trying to own everything, Bill; you're not helping anyone. If you want to be sure Microsoft participates fully in the Web future, we don't mind; just stop buying and try investing.

Comdex notebook: Bill kills rocker, nobody loves Larry, and geeks can't dance

This is a town with its own version of reality, and Comdex takes that reality and warps it into something else entirely. Here, then, are snippets of just what forms the big show's scene.

Think the Web will never replace newspapers in the bathroom because you can't plug in from the pot? Think again.

Chip maker National Semiconductor Inc. wants to make it easier to surf and flush with WebPad, a wireless electronic tablet that lets users browse the Web from anywhere.

"You can view Web pages in the kitchen, in the bathroom, even outside your house," said Steve Tobak, National Semi’s VP of marketing.

But not yet. Though the company was showing off the technology at Comdex, it’s not yet in final product form.

After his lengthy keynote Sunday night, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates looked a little under the weather, needing three people to help him down the stairs at the Hilton Nightclub.

Nonetheless, Gates -- always a crowd magnet -- was thronged by the press. One tape-recorder-toting reporter asked Bill if he felt like a rock star, perhaps like Johnny Rotten.

"Johnny Rotten is dead," Gates sneered, turning on his heels and marching off. Sorry Bill ... Mr. Rotten is still alive and snotty.

Meanwhile, Oracle Corp. CEO Larry Ellison did all he could to get people to tune into his less-than-optimally scheduled keynote address (it competed against Microsoft’s Bellagio party Monday night, one of the hottest tickets at the show). He hired a biplane to fly above Vegas touting the event and even gave away free T-shirts to attendees.

Didn’t work, though. Scavengers roamed through the aisles after Larry’s words of wisdom, plucking hundreds of unclaimed shirts from the seats.

Speaking of the Microsoft party, if those freshly scrubbed Microsoft workers looked like they would fit right in with the hip khaki-clad dancers in the Gap commercials, well, they wouldn’t.

Even the country’s most popular swing band couldn’t convince those cats to dance. Many attendees of Microsoft’s Big Bad Voodoo Daddy party crowded the stage, then stood like robots and merely watched the band that was propelled to fame by the movie "Swingers."

Is Phillipe Kahn, now president of Starfish Software Inc., auditioning for a spot on Microsoft’s witness list at the DOJ trial?

Perhaps the company should consider Kahn, after his speech Monday night suggested there are no longer monopolies in the industry.

"The days of one company saying, ’We are going to go out there and crush the competition and have 90 percent of the market’ are over!" Kahn, the ex-CEO of Borland, told the audience at Andy Seybold’s 8th Annual Wireless Dinner.

When exactly did they end, Phillipe? After Microsoft rolled over Borland?

Too cool to wear a box on your head? Then you’re probably too cool to win a free scanner.

The award for best marketing gimmick of Comdex goes to Agfa, which convinced hundreds of show-goers to wear an empty scanner box on their head. The company promised that spotters would be roaming the show, looking to give free scanners to the box-trotters.

"At first I thought it was silly," Comdex attendee Cynthia Spiller acknowledged, glancing upward at her boxy bonnet. "Then I saw what you could win."

A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N

LEXMARK OPTRA C
COLOR
LASER PRINTER

Folks, the LEXMARK Optra C has to be the very best yet in its price range. It is far superior to anything weˆ ve seen or used as of yet. It is said that ONE Picture is worth a thousand words. The output from the Lexmark Optra C is worth ten thousand words! Send for the free sample now. Drop us an Email with your address.

A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N

The Kids’ Computing Corner

The Kids’ Computing Corner
Computer news and software reviews
from a parent’s point of view

Dr. Brain Thinking Games: Puzzle Madness
Windows/Mac CD-ROM
About $25
For ages 9 and up
Knowledge Adventure
4100 W. 190th Street
Torrance CA 90504
1-800-542-4240
www.KnowledgeAdventure.com

Program Requirements

	IBM	MacIntosh
OS:	Windows 3.1-Windows 95	System 7.5 or later
CPU:	Pentium	PowerPC
HD Space:	15 MB	15 MB

Memory:	8MB	8 MB
Graphics:	640 by 480 with 256 color	256 colors 13" monitor
Audio:	MPC-compatible sound card	

Review by Frank Sereno (fsereno@uti.com)

Dr. Brain Thinking Games: Puzzle Madness is a neat learning game that teaches logic and reasoning to children through puzzle solving. With cool graphics, funny dialog and interesting challenges, Puzzle Madness will delight your children (and many adults too) for many hours.

It’s 2326 and Dr. Brain has been reduced to a disembodied brain in a jar. With no limbs, Dr. Brain needs some assistance with his experiments. Since good help is hard to find, he creates two clones of himself to be his assistants. Unfortunately, the cloning process creates a small problem. One replica, Conn, contains the dark side of the Doctor’s nature. The second clone, Pro, contains all that is good. Conn has decided to destroy the city with various gadgets at his disposal. He’ll travel about the city blowing up, burning or crushing all the major landmarks. The player’s task is to guide Pro in his quest to obtain the equipment and people necessary to defeat Conn before the city is destroyed. In order to gain the gadgets and friends, heˆ ll have to solve puzzles.

Puzzle Madness contains seven different puzzle games. The puzzles get more difficult as you progress through the game. You can play the game at three levels of difficulty. Each puzzle has its own host with a unique personality. In Blimp Aeronaut, you’re at the controls of a giant blimp. You must guide it over docking zones in sequence while avoiding tall buildings and dangerous fans. Using the keyboard to control the motors takes a bit of manual dexterity (so kids should have no problems, just parents and software reviewers). Another game is Power Towers. In this one, you use magnetic forces to repel or attract an electron through a series of towers to provide electricity for the city.

Network Nuisance simulates a computer virus. By checking how the triangles are connected, you can cure virus infections with shots of anti-virus. A well-placed shot can cure most infections with a single chain reaction. Cyborusk Battle is a game of capture the flag between competing teams of droids. You choose the means of transportation, the armament, the weapon targets and your destination as you race to your opponent’s battle flag. Cyborusk is really a beginning lesson in programming and it’s a lot of fun for Dads! Crystal Lock is an interesting lock puzzle. Red, blue and green stones are placed on a square tile floor. You have four lasers with red, blue and green beams on each side of the floor. You must use the same color beam to push the stones toward colored gates. You must match each stone to the same color gate. As the game progresses, tiles are covered so you are playing blind.

Factory Fracas is a challenging task. Pro must reassemble factory machines while avoiding hostile robots. Different techniques and nimble fingers are needed to complete these puzzles. The final puzzle game is Hazardous Containment. Your task is to guide colored waste canisters to the proper receptacles by opening or closing gates. To stabilize the system, all waste bins must be full simultaneously. You may need to combine canisters to create the proper colors. It’s fast and furious action (and it’s the one puzzle I didn’t like).

The player guides Pro around the city. At various locations he will find the puzzles. Solve the puzzle and he gets a gadget or gains ally to use against Conn. Players should listen carefully to the newsbot reports given after Conn destroys a landmark because those contain critical information about the weapons in Conn’s arsenal. If the player doesn’t have the correct items when he crosses Conn’s path, Conn will defeat him and steal items from Pro’s inventory, making the task all the more difficult.

Dr. Brain Thinking Games: Puzzle Madness has excellent production values. The graphics are delightful and the animations are often whimsical. The game has a lot of humorous interplay from the puzzle hosts and Dr. Brain. The puzzles are simple enough at first, but they become very challenging as the game progresses. You can be sure that your child is getting some serious brain exercise playing Puzzle Madness. In the words of my ten year-old son Jeremy, he "liked the game because of its puzzles. They make me use my brain to figure them out."

Knowledge Adventure backs this game with a ONE YEAR 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEE. If you are dissatisfied with this program, just return to Knowledge Adventure with your receipt for a full refund or exchange it for a title of equivalent value. The company is also currently offering a $25 rebate if you buy both Puzzle Madness and its other new Dr. Brain Thinking Games release, IQ Adventure. A certain discount club chain is selling both titles bundled together for under $30, making your final cost for two games to be less than five dollars!

Dr. Brain Thinking Games: Puzzle Madness is a great game to share with your kids. It’s a fun way to get children to develop logic and reasoning skills. With its great price and astounding guarantee, you have nothing to lose in purchasing. Based on the experiences in our family, your children will love Puzzle Madness. Give it a try and I think you will too.

Polaroid ColorShot(c) Digital Photo Printer Review

Polaroid ColorShot(c) Digital Photo Printer
MSRP $299
Around $250 retail
www.colorshot.com

review by Frank Sereno (fsereno@uti.com)

Polaroid’s ColorShot Digital Photo Printer is an intriguing and impressive peripheral. This small foot-printed wonder can turn any computer image into a durable, glossy instant photo in a mere fifteen seconds. Whether the image’s source is the Internet, a screen capture, a scanner or a digital camera, the ColorShot provides great results time after time.

Installation of the ColorShot is a breeze. My review unit is the parallel port version which uses an included external power adapter. If you have a compatible computer, you can opt for the USB version which uses only a single cable to connect to your computer and draw power. The ColorShot can use either ColorShot or Spectra film. Spectra film is widely available so you can easily obtain consumables. Changing film packs is very simple with no fuss and no muss. Just slide out the film tray, remove the old pack, insert the new one and then close the tray. You don't have to press any buttons, wait for motors to position an ink cartridge or have to get any messy ink on your hands.

Printing an image is very simple and even children can do it. Just pull up your favorite image editing software and select a graphic. Crop it to the proper size, select the programˆ s print option and then choose the ColorShot as the destination. The printer driver has a helpful preview option. If you don't like what you see, you can cancel the operation to prevent wasting film. The driver also indicates the remaining film in the pack. You can make up to ten copies (the number of prints in a film pack) of the image in one run. The printer only takes 15 seconds to eject each photo. It takes two to three minutes for each print to develop fully in bright, glossy color featuring continuous tones.

The ColorShot is ideal for many home and business applications. With its small size, portability and available accessories, it's ideal for mobile use. Law enforcement officers on car patrol can quickly get images from headquarters to identify criminals or missing persons. Real estate agents can use the ColorShot to print photos of properties for clients. Families can use it to make quick and easy re-prints of favorite family photos for friends and loved ones. Imagine the fun at a party where you can quickly give out copies of photos taken that very day. The printer is bundled with MGIˆ s PhotoSuite image editing software so users can edit and enhance the images before printing. If you need a durable, eye-catching photos, the ColorShot will provide them.

On the downside, the ColorShot costs about the same as a mid-level consumer inkjet printer, but it lacks the versatility. You are not going to be able to print a newsletter, greeting card or term paper with the ColorShot. The printouts are smallish at approximately 3 by 3-1/2 inches. You can't trim the printed photos to a smaller size due to the hazardous materials contained within the film. If you prefer your photos with a matte finish, you're out of luck with the ColorShot because it only produces glossy prints. Prints are pricey at about a dollar each If you have limited need for photo reproduction and you need a more versatile printer, then the ColorShot is not the choice for you.

On the upside, the ColorShot provides consistent results with durable, glossy photographs. You will never see banding or bleeding on a ColorShot digital photo. The continuous tone images of the ColorShot are beautiful to behold. You never have to work with messy ink cartridges or worry about a cartridge running dry part way through a job. You don't have to hunt for special papers or ink cartridges to get highly detailed, photographic-quality images. The printer has few moving parts so it should last through many years of service. Itˆ s so easy to use that even youngsters can get fantastic results.

Polaroid has recently created another accessory for the ColorShot. The Direct Connect adapter allows users to connect a wide variety of digital cameras directly to the ColorShot. You can now print photos without importing them into a computer first. This accessory sells for $99 and the

staff hopes to review it a future date.

Polaroid’s ColorShot Digital Photo Printer is a terrific product. If you reproduce digital images and need durable, high quality prints, then the ColorShot will more than meet your needs. It’s a great tool for both home and business.

Requirements: Windows 95 version 4.00.950 B or Windows 98, 16MB of RAM, 50MB of hard disk space, SVGA graphics, mouse or compatible pointing device and a CD-ROM drive. No computer needed if used with the Direct Connect digital camera adapter.

EDUPAGE STR Focus Keeping the users informed

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JUDGE BLOCKS CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION ACT

A federal judge Thursday issued a temporary restraining order, delaying the U.S. Justice Department from enforcing the Child Online Protection Act until at least Dec. 4. The injunction came in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Privacy Information Center and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, as well as publishers like Time Warner and the New York Times. The law requires commercial Web sites to ensure that they are not transmitting material that could be "harmful to minors." Sites requiring a credit card for access or that use an online age-verification service would be exempt. The plaintiffs say the law is too broad and infringes on free speech rights. (TechWeb 29 Nov 98)

E-STAMPS ON THE WAY

E-Stamp Internet Postage has struck deals with America Online, CompuServe and Digital City to offer online postage stamp service to their members. E-Stamp offers a technology that allows Internet users to purchase postage online and print "digital stamps" on envelopes, labels, or directly onto a document, using a standard printer. The U.S. Postal Service has approved the E-Stamp system for test markets, and the company plans to roll out its

service nationwide next year. (Investor’s Business Daily 20 Nov 98)

JAPAN TO MICROSOFT: UNBUNDLE YOUR SOFTWARE

Japan’s Fair Trade Commission has ruled that Microsoft has engaged in unfair business practices, in violation of that country’s anti-monopoly laws, by bundling word processing and spreadsheet software that was pre-installed in personal computers. Microsoft does not believe it violated any laws, and says it has already stopped the practices cited by the FTC. (Associated Press 20 Nov 98)

SINGAPORE WANTS A LEADING ROLE IN INTERNET COMMERCE

The government of Singapore has a goal of boosting transaction revenues over the Internet from $150 million this year to $3 billion in 2002, and wants to help companies in the U.S. and elsewhere establish and manage Internet-related sales to the region. The plan is showing signs of success, and Compaq and Hewlett-Packard have already set up centers in Singapore for the purpose of dealing with electronic commerce. (Associated Press 19 Nov 98)

PREMIUM ISPs ON THE RISE

A new class of Internet service provider is emerging, variously termed premium, enterprise-class or, sometimes, super ISP. The new operations promise speedy, traffic-free Internet connections for companies that depend on industrial-strength Internet connections for conducting e-commerce orn binding together wide area networks. In addition to avoiding the gridlock of the "people’s" Internet, the premium ISPs offer specialized services, including hosting Web sites, maintaining dedicated data centers for Web sites and intranets, and providing an extra degree of security and network reliability not available from plain-vanilla ISPs. Although the super ISPs use the same backbone fiber connections as everyone else, they pay premium rates for special routing arrangements that keep their data on the fastest links. "It’s how the ISP makes use of the available capacity through sophisticated routing arrangements that really establishes the speed and reliability of the network," says a senior VP for Concentric Network Corp., a premium ISP. (CIO 15 Nov 98)

FCC DECIDES ON 5% FEES FOR DIGITAL BROADCASTERS

The Federal Communications Commission has ruled that digital broadcasters should pay the government 5% of their gross revenues for new pay-TV services such as all-movie channels or stock quotations. That percentage, which the FCC chose on the theory that it represents what the government would received if spectrum for such services had been auctioned off, pleased neither the broadcast industry nor consumer advocates. The National Association of Broadcasters says the figure is too high, and will effectively discourage broadcasters from offering the kind of programming and data delivery that cable and others offer. Consumer advocates argue that the figure is too low, and won’t represent fair compensation to the public for the great value given to broadcasters awarded digital channels. (USA Today 20 Nov 98)

INTERNET SNAFU LEAVES COMMISSIONERS RED-FACED

Web surfers who clicked on the Boynton Beach (Fla.) Web site this past week were surprised by a link that to another site advertising how to make money by having sex with nurses and other risque fare. The link to www.tit.com had previously connected to city commissioner James Titcomb’s

Web site for James Titcomb Creative Inc., which specializes in marketing and advertising. Several weeks ago, however, that URL was hijacked by a company calling itself Tekpro Associates in Yonkers, N.Y. A spokeswoman for Network Solutions, which handles domain name registrations, said that someone posing as Titcomb had requested the name be transferred, and that Network Solutions had complied. Titcomb, who called the theft "piracy" and was threatening to sue whoever is responsible, says he chose his URL because "I'm living in a society that chooses to make fun of the sexual innuendoes associated with my last name," and that his site generates about 12,000 visits a month. (Orlando Sun-Sentinel 20 Nov 98)

VIRGINIA LIBRARY BARRED FROM SOFTWARE-FILTERING

U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema in Alexandra, Virginia, has decided against a Loudon County (Virginia) library system that wanted to use software filtering to shield minors from sexually explicit material on the Internet. Brinkema, a former librarian, ruled that the Library Board's policy "offends against the guarantee of free speech in the First Amendment" by constraining Internet access for adults, even though the policy had been aimed at protecting only children. (Washington Post 24 Nov 98)

AOL POSITIONED TO BE LEADER OF MEDIA & E-COMMERCE

Its acquisition of Netscape is expected to give America Online, already the largest dialup online service, a huge advantage in competing in the online media and electronic commerce markets. Industry analyst James F. Moore of Geopartners Inc. says, "Acquiring Netscape would really enhance America Online's role as the premier Internet media company. America Online is assembling the kind of audience that will convince people the Internet is becoming a mainstream media." How will the merger work? Gene DeRose of the Jupiter Communications consulting company explains that there is a culture clash between the two companies: "AOL has been a driven and focused consumer marketing company. But they've had an uneasy relationship with technology. Steve Case [AOL's chief executive] has always said, 'I don't care where the technology is; we just have to be where the action is.'" (New York Times 24 Nov 98)

'TIS THE SEASON OF E-SHOPPING

A study by Dell Computer and Louis Harris & Associates predicts that 43% of PC users in the U.S. will do some of their holiday shopping on the Internet this Christmas season -- a big jump from last year's 10%. To accommodate the surge, many online retailers are ramping up their systems, in the hope of making the initial online shopping experience a pleasant one. "If customer support is not there, people will try the site once and never come back," warns the manager for Northwest Airlines' interactive distribution unit. (Information Week 16 Nov 98)

ONLINE CONSUMERS TRUST NET NEWS

A survey of 2,200 people conducted by Jupiter Communications indicates that more than 80% of U.S. online consumers say they trust Internet news sources as much as they trust newspaper and television news sources, with 7% answering that online news is even more reliable than its pre-Internet counterparts. (Los Angeles Times 23 Nov 98)

RECORDING INDUSTRY FAILS TO BLOCK RIO

The Recording Industry Association of America has lost its bid for a

preliminary injunction against Diamond Multimedia’s Rio device, which can download MP3 music files from a PC to a memory card inside the device for playback. The group had argued that Rio violates the Home Recording Act. In response to RIAA objections, however, Sony Electronics and Creative Labs, which also plan to market the devices, are working to implement technology that will prevent mass reproduction of copyrighted music. "MP4 has a watermarking technology... that can stop a second copy from being made or disable the fidelity function to stop an exact duplicate from being made," says Micah Stroud, Creative’s audio product marketing manager. In addition to objecting to the MP3 and MP4 devices, RIAA also wants copyright protection built into CD-R and CD-RW drives to block the duplication of music CDs. "Does CD-R worry us?" asks, Cary Sherman, RIAA senior executive VP and general counsel. "Of course. Not just because of the home copying, but because it is creating a generation of entrepreneurial pirates. A person used to need a factory to do this. Now all that’s needed is a table and computer." (Computer Retail Weekn 22 Nov 98)

AGENCIES GET NEW REPORT CARDS ON Y2K READINESS

Saying "the picture is a gloomy one," Congressman Stephen Horn, chair of the House subcommittee responsible for overseeing government progress on averting the Y2K problem, has given out new report cards to federal agencies. Three departments flunked: Justice; Health & Human Services; and State. The Defense Department gets a D-minus. Three departments get A grades: Small Business Administration; Social Security Administration; and the National Science Foundation. The Social Security Administration began working on the problem in 1989, eight years before most other government agencies. (USA Today 24 Nov 98)

Bits & Bytes

by R. F. Mariano

The Stuff Dreams are made of.....

[Whole Bunch of Pictures... see HTML version]
    [Floor Plan]
    [Master Stateroom]
    [Berths]
    [Master Head]
    [Stateroom]
    [Guest Head]

S P E C I F I C A T I O N S

    Length 53’10" [16.40 m]
    Length less Pulpit 50’10" [15.49 m]

Beam 18’0" [5.49 m]
Draft 5’0" [1.52 m]
Headroom 6’5" [1.95 m]
Sleeping Capacity 6
Approx. Weight 48,000 lbs [21,792 kg]

Fuel Capacity 1,000 gal [3,785 L]

Clearance in Water 18’6" [5.64 m]

Water Capacity 200 gal [757 L]

Standard Power CAT 3406 DIESELS - 800 HP

Optional Power CAT 3412 DIESELS - 1,350 HP

Salon

Laundry

Florida Shark Attack
Boy Severed in Two

(Reuters) - VERO BEACH, Fla. A 9-year-old boy killed by a shark off Florida’s Atlantic coast was severed in two and bled to death, a medical examiner said Tuesday. James Tellasmon of Vero Beach was splashing and playing in the surf with family and friends on Saturday off Florida’s central Atlantic coast when he suddenly began to flail about and quickly disappeared beneath the water, witnesses reported. The lower half of his body was recovered on Sunday but the rest was not found.

An autopsy on Monday confirmed the boy was the victim of an attack by a powerful shark. Dr. Fred Hobin, the regional medical examiner, told Reuters that the autopsy showed signs of traumatic hemorrhaging from wounds inflicted by the shark. He said the boy was attacked in shallow surf about 100 yards off shore. But no one had reported seeing any sharks in the area where the attack occurred.

"There are experts who think a shark can be identified by the kind of bite mark it leaves, or a tooth that might come out during the attack, but in this case we’ve looked for those signs and found nothing," he said. Shark attacks are not rare in Florida but fatal attacks are, experts said. Tellasmon’s death is just the third in the past decade. Sharks common off Florida, such as lemon sharks, often grow to be 12 feet long, but they are more likely to attack a dead body than a living person, said George Burgess, a shark expert at the University of Florida.

Got a question relative to something....

* We have covered or reviewed?
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Painter 3D(c) Review

Painter 3d(c)
MetaCreations
for Windows 95/98 and Windows NT 4.0/Power Mac
Suggested Retail Price -- $449 US
Estimated Retail Price -- $299 US
Upgrade from Detailer -- $149 US
http://www.metacreations.com

Review by Donna Lines (dlines@uti.com)

Painter 3D replaces Detailer, MetaCreations' original 3D paint program. Painter 3D gives the 3D artist the ability to use natural-feel media to paint on a 3D model's surface in real time. The program includes numerous natural media brushes, such as brush, felt pen, crayons, airbrush, and chalk, just to name a few. You can control the size of the brush nib and each brush has several settings to control attributes such as cover density and smoothness or graininess for a variety of effects.

Just like it's 2D sibling Painter5, Painter 3D allows you to apply special lenses, like Impasto or Glass Distortion, on transparent layers for really cool special effects without changing the underlying image. Paint directly on the model or in the image window. With up to 32 levels of Undo, you have the freedom to experiment without fear of mistakes. You can rotate the 3D image using the Virtual Trackball so you can apply color and highlights precisely where you want them.

There are six different maps (or channels) that can be applied to the model Texture (color), Bump (surface relief), Highlight, Reflection, Glow (useful for objects that emit light such as lamps), and Environment (an image that appears in reflections on objects). The maps can be shared on multiple images and when you change the maps, all affected images are updated simultaneously, a real time-saver. You can add lights to see how

your object will look in a 3D program; however, the lights do not become part of the model. Painter 3D includes a 2D rendering engine so your image can be used as a still image for printing or displaying on the Web.

Painter 3D can export and import models in industry standard formats including QuickDraw 3DMF, 3D Studio RF, DXF, and Wavefront OBJ. Plug-ins are provided for MetaCreations' Ray Dream Studio 5.0.2/Ray Dream 3D and Kinetix's 3D Studio Max to allow Painter 3D to work directly with both programs. I tested the plug-in for Ray Dream Studio, version 5.0.2 on a Pentium 200 Pro with 96 MB of RAM. After installing the plug-in and setting up the preferences in Ray Dream properly, the plug-in transported the selected image into Painter 3D very well. However, I consistently received the error "Object not edited in Painter 3D" when I attempted to reload the image into Ray Dream using the plug-in's dialog box. The work-around outlined in the PDF file on the CD-ROM worked very well, although not as conveniently as the reload button. Note: MetaCreations released an update on their web site to address several issues, however, this problem was not fixed.

Included are 88 high-quality Zygote 3D models in native Painter 3D format that are ready for you to open and begin painting. Painter 3D gives the artist complete control over the workspace with customizable palettes. You can set up a palette to show the tools you use most, and you can even set up different palettes for different projects.

Graphic Artists already familiar with MetaCreations' Painter 5 program will quickly adapt to Painter 3D's interface. Those new to paint programs or digital artistry will find the program moderately difficult to learn, but well worth the effort. Included on the CD-ROM is an excellent tutorial in PDF format to help get you started and introduce the user to the powerful features. Overall, I found the program very powerful, fun to use, and an excellent supplement to 3D modeling programs.

System Requirements:

WINDOWS: 486 DX or better processor;
Windows 95/98 or Windows NT 4.0;
16 MB System (32+ recommended);
Hard Drive with 30 MB free space;
CD-ROM drive;
24-bit color recommended;
supports most pressure sensitive tablets.
SGVA Card and Monitor;
mouse or tablet;
and CD-ROM drive.

MacOS: Power Macintosh;
16 MB application Ram (24+ recommended);
Hard Drive with 30 MB free space;
CD-ROM drive; 24-bit color recommended;
supports most pressure sensitive tablets.

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Linux Advocate
Column #29
November 27th, 1998

by Scott Dowdle
dowdle@icstech.net
ICQ UIN: 15509440

LOGIN:

How was your Thanksgiving? Mine was fantastic. The in-laws came into town and brought most of the holiday meal with them. I certainly do have a lot to be thankful for all year long. With the holiday crunch, this edition was kind of just thrown togethe r, but that is a general description for all my columns, eh? :) Enjoy!

News

Item #1: Linux Kernel 2.2 Due By Christmas - Seems like more and more journalists are listening when Linus speaks. A story on TechWeb quotes him a few times from the posting he included with the latest kernel release which happens to detail that the 2.2. x kernel will probably be out by Christmas. Somehow TechWeb got the impression that the 2.0.x production kernel hasn't been updated since 1996 which simply isn't true. In fact, 2.0.36 was recently released. See elsewhere in this edition for news of 2.0 .36. Make sure you check out this article though, it is worth the read:

http://www.techweb.com/wire/story/TWB19981120S0018

Item #2: A very awesome Linux at Comdex presentation - A fellow by the name of Marc Merlin has put up a page that covers much of the Linux activity that was at the recent Comdex show. I like this page because it has a lot of pictures. Look mom, there ar e even some Linux babes. :) Enjoy it at the following URL:

http://marc.merlins.org/linux/comdex98/

Item #3: Linux Rules for New Users - Writer Robin Miller is at it again. Robin said that whenever he writes about Linux he always gets a slew of email from people outside the Linux community asking what is it, where can I get it, etc. He wrote this column to put people on the right path. Check it out if you aren't a member of the Linux community yet:

http://www.andovernews.com/cgi-bin/news_column.pl?190

Item #4: IBM Giving Away DB2 for Linux - Isn't it odd how all of these big companies are giving away Linux software? Since that is such an exciting and teasing question I just asked, I'll be mysterious and not provide any other info other than to say... check out the following URL:

http://www.crn.com/dailies/weekending112098/nov20dig04.asp

Item #5: The Trojan Horse - Bruce Perens writes about a potential security hazard that we should all be aware of. Just because Open Source means that the source code is included doesn't mean that someone won't try and pull a fast one someday. This following URL doesn't predict anything, it just tries to keep people aware that security is important and we should always stay on our toes. Che ck it out at the following URL:

http://lwn.net/1998/1119/Trojan.html

Item #6: New Production Kernel - As previously mentioned, the 2.0.36 kernel was released recently. It is primarily maintained by Alan Cox leaving Linus Torvalds to devote all of his attention to the development 2.1.x kernel series. The following URL is a Spartan overview of what has changed from 2.0.35 to 2.0.36. Check it out if you are interested:

http://lwn.net/1998/1119/a/36releasenotes.html

One of the new features added to 2.0.36 was something called Traffic Shaping which is fleshed out more fully in the development kernels so look for it in a major way when 2.2.x is released. Anyway, the folks at the Linux Weekly News site have put togethe r something that serves as an introduction to this new feature which acts as a very precise control over the system's outgoing network traffic. A very interesting new feature so check it out at the following URL:

Traffic Shaper
http://lwn.net/1998/1119/shaper.html

Item #7: FUD Piece of the Week - It's a toss up. The following two URLs are classic examples of Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt targeted at Linux. Try either of these on for size:

I Come Not to Praise Linux -
http://www.zdnet.com/zdnn/stories/zdnn_rc_display2/0,3733,372462,00.html

Charge of the Linux Brigade
http://www.abcnews.com/sections/tech/FredMoody/moody981120.html

Item #8: Watch Out, Windows NT! - Fortune magazine does its first piece on Linux. Not a lot of noteworthy stuff in the article but since it does come from a reputable source, I figured it was worth a mention. Find it at the following URL:

http://cgi.pathfinder.com/yourco/articles/0,2227,139,00.html

Item #9: Linus Torvalds, geek magnet - At the bottom of a column logging recent events is a mention of Linus speaking at a conference and the adoration that seems to follow him. It's worth a read for humorous content:

http://www.salonmagazine.com/21st/log/

SPOTLIGHT: New Production Kernel is released - 2.0.36

The 2.0.x production kernel series has been updated 36 times (and I'm not talking in-between patches that would more than triple that number) since it's initial release in 1996. Below you'll find a posting Linus sent out on it last week.

--- quote begins here ---

Date: Sun, 15 Nov 1998 22:01:41 -0800 (PST)
From: Linus Torvalds <torvalds@transmeta.com>
To: Kernel Mailing List <linux-kernel@vger.rutgers.edu>
Subject: Linux-2.0.36..

Is out there.

I won't claim any false credit for this: all the 2.0.x work was done by Alan Cox as the maintainer, and the 2.0.36 that is out there is exactly the same as Alan's "pre-22" version that he asked people to check out. He just asked me to "sprinkle some holy penguin-pee on it" to bless it and make it official. This I have done (*).

2.0.36 is a lot of updates, mostly to various drivers. ISDN, various SCSI drivers and network cards have been updated quite heavily. ISDN to the degree that you need to make sure you have the most recent tools in order to play well with it.

Have fun,

Linus

(*) This, btw, is not something I would suggest you do in your living room. Getting a penguin to pee on demand is _messy_. We're talking yellow spots on the walls, on the ceiling, yea verily even behind the fridge.

However. I would also advice against doing this outside - it may be a lot easier to clean up, but you're likely to get reported and arrested for public lewdness. Never mind that you had a perfectly good explanation for it all.

--- quote ends here ---

SPOTLIGHT: Richard M. Stallman speaks up about QPL

Hopefully Mr. Stallman needs no introduction. Just in case he does (for new readers), briefly, RMS is the founder of the Free Software Foundation aka the GNU Project and he is the grand daddy of all Free Software spokesmen, often seen by some members in the community as an extremist. He recently posted some thoughts to a GNU oriented newsgroup about the license that Troll Tech. has decided to adopted for their QT GUI API library. As you may remember, the original licensing agreement of QT has been the center of a controversy for some time and was the cause of the KDE vs. GNOME community fracture.

>From the posting you can see that Mr. Stallman thinks that the QPL (Qt Public License) is a step in the right direction and respects Troll Tech

for making such a choice... although there are still some minor details that have to be sorted out. The "Harmo ny" that Mr. Stallman mentions is a project that was started to produce a GPL'ed (GNU General Public License) clone of the QT GUI library. Many people in the community see the Harmony Project as unneeded now that QT has adopted the QPL. Is that enough lingo for everyone? :)

--- quote begins here ---

Date: Sat, 21 Nov 1998 10:49:38 -0500
From: rms@gnu.org (Richard Stallman)
Newsgroups: gnu.misc.discuss
Subject: On the QPL

The latest news about Qt is that Troll Tech has proposed to rerelease it under a new license, the QPL. This license would make Qt free software; there would no longer be a principled reason to reject using it, and thus no principled reason to reject using KDE. Indeed, if Qt is Troll Tech's only product (which might be so; I don't know), then by a strange reversal, this would actually make them a free software company.

However, the QPL has major practical drawbacks: source modifications can be released only in the form of patches, and it is incompatible with the GNU GPL. This means that linking existing GPL-covered software with Qt would require giving special permission.

With Qt being free software, there would be no fundamental reason to refuse this special permission, but it remains better if we can avoid it. As a practical matter, it will be preferable to use Harmony, both to avoid the need to make special exceptions, and to avoid the practical inconvenience of the requirement to distribute modifications patches.

--- quote ends here ---

LOGOUT:

I haven't gotten anywhere with my Sun ELC yet. I have progressed forward on my planning though. I have found a piece of hardware in a BlackBox catalog that I simply must have to make networking with the Sun much easier - a AUI ethernet to 10BaseT transc eiver. Haven't ordered it yet but will soon. My point? More later. As always, thanks for reading!

Scott Dowdle

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All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word

processor format for Word 6.0 and/or Word Perfect 7ˆ . The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at Twelve (12) points.

* No Indenting on any paragraphs!!

* No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmicks"

* No underlining!

* Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Or, columns in Word or Word Perfect format. Do NOT, under any circumstances, use the space bar. MS Word is Preferred.

* Most of all. PLEASE! No ASCII "ART"!!

* There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy

* Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats

* Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately

* Please use a single font in an article. TTF Times New Roman is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
rmariano@streport.com
STReport International Online Magazine

STR Editor’s Mail Call "
...a place for the readers to be heard"

Editor’s MailBag

Messages * NOT EDITED * for content

This message is a combination of the sent messge and the reply. Its from STReport’s new discussion area on Delphi.

STReport’s Discussion Forum on Delphi

FREE JOIN TODAY! FREE

From: Bill Halvorsen

To:Ralph F. Mariano

Reply (indented) included from R. Mariano

OK Ralph, had to see what was going on here.
Still waiting on delivery of my Atari Falcon... oh sorry I lost a few years there.

> Hahahah.... I heard that! I went for all the craziness too. For far too many years, the Tramiels jerked people around real hard. In the end, I was proven correct across the boards by the Tramiel's actions. STReport was censored, blocked and severely criticized by the "crazed zealots" on the platform but in the end, they too (most of 'em) got the short end of the stick.

I have some broad generalizations that could kick off some discussion. First, I'm a long-time Microsoftie, starting with Windows 3.0 on my God-Forsaken Epson 386-16. Crash.

> As for MS, many seem to play the "us and them" game... that's ok for competitors in the business but for users to do so is a futile exercise in mental masturbation. Everywhere I turn I see people yapping about how MS is gonna get taught a lesson by the DOJ. That's a joke. In fact, its hilarious! MS may have to redirect some of its goals but that'll be about the extent of what's going to happen.
>
> For example, the news that Netscape, AOL and Sun have completed some sort of merger/buyout etc.. This is good news for MS in the long run, it'll put the crybabies, Sun and Netscape, in the very same monopolistic picture MS unwillingly enjoys...Also, AOL isn't exactly the most loved network out there. In fact, I'd say it reluctantly has a love/hate relationship with its users very similar to the one MS enjoys. I say the merger.... is going to prove to be a boon to MS in more ways than one.
>
> Netscape complains... but it was their programmers who began the "wars" way back when. It continues to this day. NS 4.5 refuses to recognize zero width frame borders and thus, fails to show the frames at all. NS 4.5 refuses to recognize marquee and many other, very popular Frontpage extensions. This is seemingly done out of indignant, spiteful protest. Let's face it... Netscape had the market by the chops and blew it. I, when I first began accessing the net via cis, used the garbage they had (spry something or other) and then was advised to try NS by none other than Ron Luks. I did and I used it for quite some time. When I decided to try IE 2 or 3 ...whatever it was back then... all was fine.
>
> I then installed the newer versions of Windows 95 and still all was fine with NS. That is, until the day I decided to "remove" NS from my system. It clobbered Windows 95. It took needed system files along with it. I don't say it was on purpose but I do say and did at the time, their programmers should've been more careful in scripting their the removal routines. Then the wars heated up... NS was losing ground to IE and the innuendo's and accusations began to fly hot and heavy. NS then began to lose heavy money and position on the Stock

> Market. NS was trying every type of scheme to make money including peddling health insurance on the net! They were appearing very desperate. Those incidents brought us to where we are today... with Ellison preaching his own agenda (rent everything from me!) with people apparently listening, to NS still trying to "scheme" a way to outdo MS.

Eight years later, I still spend far too much time managing Windows on my PC and too little time being productive (whatever that means). Hobbies (old records, web page, etc.)seem to take a back seat to my constant desire for Windows to work ...better ... or something. That has taken me through a couple 486's, two Pentiums and now a PII.... and a whole lot of motherboards and peripherals. We run Windows 95 on a lan at work; it is stable and 90% of the problems come from the server. It's stable because it is frozen in time: no tweaks, few upgrades (JUST got Office 97). Not throwing in new drivers and apps makes Windows rock solid. Not possible at home, however!

> Windows from the very first version I struggled with (Windows 1)... I struggled so hard that I began to reach out to MS and wound up on a number of MS beta teams way back then and have been there ever since in increasing amounts. Without going to deep... I can say the future of Windows is assured to be even more rock solid and honestly, fun to use. I'm using six different machines in the office and a laptop. All of which enjoy different versions of Windows 98 and NT. It all looks wonderful for the end users. In fact, Win98 and its "big brother" NT5 at this time are the most solid of operating Systems I have used.

Lessons learned after all this time with Windows? Mostly that I do much better without utilities such as Norton, that Windows has bugs both in OS and MS apps, and that faster PC's are never far around the corner, and I can't afford to keep up.

> Nortons utilities are somewhat cranky but their Winfax Pro v9 is superb. I'd be lost without it.

I will say that now with a PII *at last* I have attained what seems like great speed, with the Asus P2B m/b, Deathstar HDD's, Matrox G-200 vid card (and the old Monster for some games). Now, with this m/b, everything works that should, such as power management.

> I see you've joined the club! PII is the way to go. Sure Itel has its warts too but... their hardware cranks. I use ABIT motherboards. I have the Matrox agp cards with 16mb of vid/ram and the new Voodo Monster 3d on one system for my gaming pleasures.

So it's smooth sailing now, but Microsoft angers me with their impossible "support" (90 days for something that will always have bugs?). Money 99 has a payee address bug. Reinstalling Office 97 Pro on the new machine resulted in my being told I did not have a license to Access... required a toll call to MS to add three long lines to the registry. Frontpage drives me bananas with "no server on port 80" which likes to pop up right when you need to update your web pages.

> I use Frontpage 98 with the latest patch and do not see that error or any real errors at all.

I used to be in that uncomfortable area where I found myself reinstalling Windows every 6 months or so just to keep it kinda sorta error free and fast... but I digress (finally)... I still like Windows, makes the PC do

neat things... but it’s a lot of trouble.

> That was indeed the case with the old Win95 950, 950a and 950b. But now, with Win98 that a thing of the past. Win98 is powerful and solid.

So will Windows 2000 be the culmination of all efforts to squash bugs and introduce some stability? Or will it just cost a lot of money and prevent me from playing Duke Nukem?

> W2K will be a knockout for all of us.... expect to see most of your wishes realized.

INTERESTING TIDBITS - FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Web retailers launch online mall to battle Amazon.com expansion

NEW YORK (WSJ) - Nine major Internet retailers, including CDnow Inc. and eToys Inc., are banding together in a new online mall to battle aggressive expansion by Amazon.com Inc. The new effort, a network of Web sites dubbed ShopperConnection, launched Monday. The participants each focus on distinct product and service categories, including music, movies, computer software and travel. By teaming up, retailers hope to attract shoppers from each other’s Web sites.

Excite, RealNetworks meld search functions

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. (Reuters) - Search engine Excite, Inc. and RealNetworks, Inc. unveiled Monday an integrated audio and visual search that will allow consumers access to multimedia Web pages. The agreement enables consumers to use Excite’s new Audio/Video search to search the Web for audio, video and multimedia content directly from the RealPlayer G2 where they are listening to or watching multimedia clips.

Hewlett-Packard reviewing business - WSJ

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Hewlett-Packard Co. had hired outside consultants to take a "fundamental look" at the company, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday. Lewis Platt, the company’s chief executive, said in an internal memo last week that the consultants would review all aspects including business lines, marketing strategies, organization and overall corporate culture. The Journal said a company spokeswoman confirmed the review was under way and said there is no timetable for its completion.

Schools, libraries soon to get Internet subsidy

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. schools and libraries will soon begin receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in federal subsidies for Internet connections, the agency in charge of the program said Monday. The non-profit Schools and Libraries Corp., established by the Federal Communications Commission to distribute the Internet subsidies, said it completed a series of audits and began notifying recipients that money was on the way. The announcement, made by Vice President Al Gore at a District of Columbia library, drew praise from library and educational groups.

Court strikes down library Internet filtering

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A U.S. District Court struck down a Virginia county's library policy requiring filtering software to block pornography on all its computers connected to the Internet. Judge Leonie Brinkema ruled Monday that the Loudoun County policy violated the First Amendment because the software also blocked adults from using library computers to access a wide array of mainstream, constitutionally-protected materials. A group of adults in the county filed the lawsuit late last year, joined by People for the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union, after the Loudoun County Library Board adopted the filtering policy in October, 1997.

Update: Reno sees no need for new probe of Gore

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Attorney General Janet Reno decided Tuesday not to seek an independent counsel to investigate alleged political fund-raising abuses by Vice President Al Gore, rejecting the evidence as "insubstantial." Reno said she found "no reasonable grounds" for further investigation of whether Gore lied to FBI agents about telephone fund-raising calls from his office in the 1996 presidential election campaign. Her decision was a major legal and political victory for Gore, since a lengthy probe might have posed significant problems in his bid to win the presidency in 2000.

Decision time for U.S. presidential hopefuls

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Several candidates have already decided to run for the U.S. presidency in 2000 and are only waiting for the right moment to make formal announcements. But for a number of others, decision time is now. "They have to decide very soon. To be a viable presidential candidate, they should be raising money, making connections and meeting voters in key states right now," said Mark Rozell, a political scientist. On the Democratic side, Vice President Al Gore has been preparing his White House bid for years and is the overwhelming favorite for his party's presidential nomination. On the Republican side, all eyes are on Texas Gov. George W. Bush, who in the minds of many of the party faithful is the only man with a realistic chance of beating Gore.

Gov. Bush steps on to world stage with Mideast trip

HOUSTON (Reuters) - Texas Gov. George W. Bush, a possible candidate for the presidency in 2000, took his first small steps onto the world stage Tuesday when he began a low-key trip to the Middle East. Bush, touted as a favorite for the Republican presidential nomination but undecided about running, was in Cairo Tuesday at the invitation of his father, former President George Bush. Spokeswoman Mindy Tucker said it was not known who Gov. Bush met with in Egypt, but the elder Bush was a guest of the Mansour Group, a private business conglomerate. Gov. Bush will visit Israel Sunday for three days.

Classics & Gaming Section

Editor Dana P. Jacobson
dpj@streport.com

> From the Atari Editor’s Desk "Saying it like it is!"
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""

BURP!! I can’t move! I’m stuffed! Finished gourging myself of turkey and all of the trimmings about two hours ago. Cleaned up, took a nap for an hour or so, and decided I’d better roll myself upstairs, crawl into this chair, and finish off this week’s issue. What a terrific meal, if I do say so myself - I’m the Thanksgiving chef! Not as many leftovers as I’d prefer - there was just Louise and I, and Butkus and Buffy (our two dogs) this year; so we didn’t go all out as we usually do. Still, there’s plenty to last for a "few days"!! YUM!

The big news this week is AOL’s purchase of Netscape. I don’t know what to think of it. But, it certainly sounds interesting - especially with the Microsoft case going on right now. I’m sure we’ll learn more as time goes on.

Well, I think I’m going back to a vegetative state for a bit longer. I have work Friday so I have to have some sort of sound mind/body.

Until next time...

Welcome to our channel Atari Member Update.

1. New MyMail update
2. My homepage under re-construction

1. M Y M A I L U P D A T E

Hi all MyMAIL users !

Now its time again for a new MyMAIL version
This time it got rev nr 0.74

Bugfixes and new things
-
**** 21.11.1998 ****
     Rev: 0.74

- Some minor MIME text decoding problems fixed.
+ Added save of dead letter.
  Mymail is now saving the mail text if the window is closed by user
  or quit of the program without any sending of the mail.
  The file is named DEAD*.TXT and is randomly numbered from 0-7
  (dead0.txt to dead7.txt)
- Fixed a bug in mailfrom window causing selection to fail randomly.
- Fixed a bug in icon redraw causing mymail to hang in sigle-TOS.
- Ctrl-V was randomly causing strange result
  this is now fixed.

The docs are updated in this version.

You can download from this address:

http://www2.tripnet.se/~erikhall/programs/mymail.html

You can add or remove yourself from MyMAIL mailinglist.
The add/remove page is found at:
http://www2.tripnet.se/~erikhall/mymailupdates.html
The mailinglist are handled by MyMAIL automaticly.

If you find any problems with MyMAIL please let me know.

Thanks to all of you for all the help i get from you all.

Best Regards

Erik Hall

2 M Y H O M E P A G E

I'm on my work with re-designing some of my webpages now and nextcoming weeks. The homepage will be more let us say "human", when finished.

http://home.bip.net/atari

Best Regards

Mille Babic
E-mail: mailto:atari@mail.b.net

>In This Week's Gaming Section - Don Thomas to VM Labs!! "Asteroids"!! "South Park"! ShockHammer Controller! "Earthworm Jim"!! And more!

>From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!

Turkey Day is winding down and I've burned most of my energy on turkey and trimmings - two or three times already.

The big gaming news with Atari connections is the announcement by Don Thomas that he's moving on, leaving Sony to work with VM Labs. As you may or not know, VM Labs is a fairly new start-up consisting of many former Atari employees (Bill Rehbock, Richard Miller, Jeff Minter, and a number of others). Their work on Project X has been interesting these past few months and it sounds like a perfect opportunity for a person with Don's abilities. I hope to talk with Don soon and learn more about his new challenge.

Until next time...

>Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile - The Latest Gaming News!

’’Asteroid’’ Game Lands in Leonids Shower

In the wake of two Hollywood asteroid movies and coinciding with the twice-in-a-lifetime peak of activity with the Leonids meteor shower, Activision last week released a 3-D update of the 1979 Atari arcade game ’’Asteroids.’’

The game stays true to the original-you’re stuck in the middle of an asteroid storm, and it’s up to you to blast your way out. This time around, however, the graphics are considerably more sophisticated than those familiar white line drawings on a black background.

The game uses sophisticated computer graphics to enhance explosions and add challenging new space hazards. The new Asteroids includes the first two-player competitive mode. And diehard nostalgia buffs can unlock the classic original arcade version of Asteroids, which is hidden in the game as an ‘‘easter egg.’’

Activision said that the game uses ‘‘nostalgic sound effects,’’ which many fans will be hoping will translate to the arcade game’s adrenaline-feeding two-note chorus.

Interplay Licenses Earthworm Jim 3D for PSX & Nintendo to Take-Two

Interplay Entertainment Corp. announced today that it has licensed the North and South American publishing rights for Earthworm Jim 3D for the Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64 to Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Earthworm Jim 3D is scheduled for release in mid-1999 for the Nintendo 64 and Sony PlayStation from Take-Two in North America and South America and from Interplay throughout the rest of the world.

‘‘The agreement provides Interplay with a significant cash advance to strengthen our balance sheet,’’ noted Interplay Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Brian Fargo. ‘‘We have enjoyed working with Take-Two in the past including our affiliate distribution of the Jetfighter series, and look forward to working with Take-Two to make Earthworm Jim 3D as successful as prior Earthworm Jim products.’’

Sam Houser, vice president of Worldwide Development for Take-Two, stated, ‘‘The Earthworm Jim character is an industry icon that has proven to be a consistent award-winner and retail success in North America. It is an honor for Take-Two to be associated with such a valuable franchise, and we are thrilled to be working with both Interplay and Shiny.’’

‘‘Earthworm Jim has been an enduring favorite for years, and now technology lets us expand his wacky world even further,’’ said David Perry, President of Shiny Entertainment, Inc. and Executive Producer of the original Earthworm Jim character and titles. ‘‘Earthworm Jim 3D will introduce the unique, hilarious antics of Jim to a new generation of gamers, who can take him snowboarding on a pig or zooming around on his pocket rocket.’’

Earthworm Jim 3D is being developed by Vis Interactive, plc., in

conjunction with Interplay and Shiny. The game features a new engine with advanced polygon-smoothing technology to give it the look of a cartoon and allow close-ups of Jim’s most animated expressions. Players will have complete freedom of movement in a fully interactive polygonal environment as they play groovy games and solve nutty puzzles on Jim’s road to mental recovery.

Acclaim Ships South Park December 21 for the Nintendo 64

Gamers can now experience what life in the hit Comedy Central series ‘‘South Park’’ is like on their N64 or PC in full 3-D! Acclaim Entertainment, Inc., a leading worldwide interactive entertainment company, will ship the anxiously-awaited South Park action game on December 21 in time for this year’s holiday season. The South Park game is based on the wildly successful television series and developed with the input of the show’s creators, Matt Stone and Trey Parker.

‘‘Acclaim has captured the show’s true nature and I think ’’South Park’s‘‘ fans will be thrilled,’’ said Larry Lieberman, vice president of strategic planning and new business development at Comedy Central.

South Park is a hilarious, action-packed adventure game, which unfolds in five episode-based, single-player adventures. Gamers can choose to play as Kyle, Stan, Cartman or Kenny in single player mode, or select among a host of 20 South Park characters when engaged in multiplayer mode. The storyline begins when a mysterious comet, visible every 666 years, is discovered to be heading right for the quiet little town of South Park. The comet causes all kinds of silly mayhem: turkeys revolt and wreak havoc, robots attack the townspeople, and aliens abduct the town’s cows. It is up to Kyle, Kenny, Cartman and Stan to save the day and bring peace to South Park using a host of gadgets including a Cow Launcher, Sniper Chicken, snowballs, Terrance and Phillip dolls, and everyone’s favorite - Mr. Hankey, the Christmas poo. Along the way, players encounter all of South Park’s classic characters - Mr. Garrison and Mr. Hat, Mephisto, and Chef.

Acclaim’s Iguana Studio, South Park’s developer, will utilize and build on technologies from its other games including Turok 2: Seeds of Evil, All-Star Baseball ’99, and NFL Quarterback Club ’99. The development team created its own proprietary speech compression technology in South Park in order to include the several hundred soundbites recorded by the show’s creators exclusively for the game. South Park’s game engine has been modified so that each character’s emotions are shown in his facial animations, with dialogue synchronized to mouth movements. The development team is also working on PC and PlayStation versions, which will be released early next year.

‘‘Acclaim is pleased to announce that the South Park game will reach store shelves in time for this holiday season,’’ says Steve Lux, vice president of marketing at Acclaim Entertainment. ‘‘The development team worked long and hard to create a hilarious action-packed title that is sure to be on the top of gamers’ holiday shopping lists.’’

Acclaim will support the launch of South Park with a multi-million dollar nationwide marketing campaign targeted to adult males including televised advertisements on Comedy Central’s(tm) ‘‘South Park’’ cable show. Acclaim has also included an additional warning label on the game’s box cover

warning purchasers of South Park’s adult content and language.

ThrustMaster Shocks the PlayStation With the New Controller

HILLSBORO, ORE. (Nov. 23) BUSINESS WIRE - Nov. 23, 1998 - ThrustMaster Inc., a leading manufacturer of game controllers for electronic entertainment, today announced the release of the ShockHammer, a new dual analog, dual shock controller, for use with the Sony PlayStation video game system.

The ShockHammer, ThrustMaster’s first dedicated PlayStation-compatible product, is making its debut exclusively with the Best Buy retail chain at a street price of $29.99.

The ShockHammer links the precision of dual analog and digital control with the tactile feedback of the new Sony PlayStation "Dual Shock" vibration function to push gaming beyond sight and sound. Powerful vibrating motors in each handle react to signals from compatible games to put players even more in touch with their gaming. With the ShockHammer, players can feel every car crash, flying kick, and major event when used with compatible games.

The ShockHammer stands out with its innovative shape, sizzling metallic blue case, and non-slip, textured grip. No other dual vibration pad looks or feels this radical. "ShockHammer is a ground-breaking controller that will shock your gaming to life," stated John Sauer, product marketing manager for Video Game Peripherals. "It is currently the only ’dual shock’ pad available whose design is markedly different from the original Sony product, as well as the only PlayStation-compatible peripheral that has a hot rod finish. Moreover, the ShockHammer’s vibration motors deliver the maximum feedback to users -- no batteries required."

>Gaming Online STR InfoFile - Online Users Growl & Purr!

Don Thomas to Move Forward With VM Labs!

Dear friends,

I have submitted my resignation to Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) effective Thursday, December 3, 1998.

On August 26th, 1996 I began a new assignment as Peripherals Licensing Manager for SCEA. When I got started, the PlayStation game console was still a young entry into the next-generation gaming market. It had already enjoyed a great deal of success, but SCEA had not yet granted final approval to any third-party companies for licensed products.

More than two years later, I stand before SCEA’s senior management with a list of accomplishments for which I am very proud. Not only are there

dozen’s of fully licensed products in which consumers can enjoy and depend upon, but with the help of a brilliant staff, I have fostered close relationships with valuable industry allies.

Mr. William Rehbock, who had created my position in ’96, left his position last year as SCEA’s Vice President of Technical Support. A new opportunity arose for him to help lead a well funded start-up company called VM Labs into their next phase of business operation.

Inspired by my desire to blend personal ambition with corporate objectives, I have also decided to consider a new career opportunity. Accordingly, in early December, I will join Mr. Rehbock’s team at VM Labs to help launch technologies that the hard core gamer, the classic gamer and the new-age gamer will all embrace. This new position is an advancement in title and compensation, but most of all, it is an opportunity that welcomes ambition and creativity. In this new position I will enjoy an unprecedented opportunity to work with licensed companies on ideas and projects that are based on positive business alliances and that will benefit all parties involved.

As a footnote to my colleagues in the industry: Until my move is complete, it is inappropriate for me to speak much more about my new position. Additionally, there are trusts that I will not violate with regard to my role at SCEA, but I do welcome your private inquiries. I sincerely hope that those with whom I have built business relationships over the years know I continue to value those relationships and intend to serve you in even greater capacities in the future. If you’ve ever liked any of my ideas in the past, I think you’ll really like the ones that we’ll speak about soon. But most of all, I think you’ll find that I have found a way to say "yes" to your proposals and inquires more than ever before; a benefit that means a great deal to me and the consumer at large.

It’s time for a cool change.

Best Wishes,

Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
datj@icwhen.com
http://www.icwhen.com

PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

Compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@streport.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Any of you who have read this column during the holidays of years past know that I normally go overboard on the holiday meals. This Thanksgiving has been no exception. I sit here Thanksgiving evening bloated and uncomfortable, wishing that I had heeded my own advice and partaken of the feast in moderation.

Oh well, maybe for Christmas dinner.... nah. <grin>

On other subjects, I had the pleasure of talking at length with Scott Dowdle, the author of the Linux column here in STReport in a conference on Delphi the other evening. I think it’s safe to say that Scott genuinely likes using and talking about Linux. The last time I someone this genuinely excited about an operating system, it was my local Atari dealer, who was extolling the virtues of TOS. Of course, that was years ago, and Linux has the advantage of being multi-platform, but the intensity is the same.

Scott and I talked for a while about doing a cross-over column comparing Linux on an Atari not only with TOS, but also with Linux on other platforms. That way, both of us could get a column’s worth of information out of the experiment. While Linux sounds like a wonderful idea and the way that all operating systems should be, it requires at least a 68030 processor and one of the two FPUs available for the Atari. This eliminates all Atari-made TOS computers except for the TT and Falcon. And even some of the TTs and Falcons were not fitted with the FPU chips. So, while Linux may not be the great white hope of all Atari users, it does provide hope for those with certain machines.

Well, I hope your Thanksgiving was a happy and safe one. Now let’s get on with all the news, hints, tips, and info available every week on the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Bill Platt writes:

"I need to find a Telnet client that conforms to a TN3270 standard. Supposedly this enables you to tab around the screen, and updates the whole screen, and not line by line. This is very important."

Peter Rottengatter tells Bill:

"Are you sure you aren’t confusing a couple of things ? If I recall correctly, 3270 is an IBM mainframe, and the above the "standard" to connect to such machines. While it’s of course possible that this fulfills your description, it is not the only, and not even the generic one, that "enables you to tab around the screen, and updates the whole screen, and not line by line". Any decent Telnet client should do this on the basis of VT emulation. For STinG, try TelStar for a "half-way" emulation (only the most important bits) of VT100, or TelVT102 for a full T102 emulation. Of course the remote must be able to talk VT100, but virtually all do that."

Martin-Eric Racine adds:

"This is the second recent post about such a protocol. Basically, people just need something that andles N3270. I recall one such post _explicitely_ stated that Telnet was _not_ an alternative. They need a terminal that is TN3270 compliant to access their employer's mainframe, using an Atari."

Michael Saeger adds:

"I'm sure someone could write such a program -- but there seems little interest. If we could get enough TN3270 Atari users together we could perhaps afford to hire a programmer. I'm sure that IBM publishes the TN3270 specification."

Charles Silver tells us a bit about his recent trials and tribulations:

"Well, Monday a ISP I've been using for years knocked me offline. It was a menagerie of problems, their's, not mine.
* They were setting up new 56k lines and the phone company routed the calls to the wrong server.
* The ISP installed new software, IntelliServer Release 1.5.5lw, and they started using a flawed login (script), relying on PAP only.

* I had a SLIP account (static IP) and a ppp account (dynamic IP). So, they switched up both accounts with crossed login names/passwords, and used my static IP for ppp which won't work ;(Killed slip altogether.
* They never informed me they were going to do a major change like this.

* I spent 4hrs Monday night going in circles sorting out each problem.

Basically, now they are a PAP only. If you try a manual/script it doesn't ask for a login name. You just have to magically guess <g>. Even if you do get logged on. You can't resolve anything.

So, bottomline, things can get a bit tough these days :) I'm back up and running using PAP, but I had to get the ISP tech to tell me what's up. nly then did he tell me what was happening. They still don't have all the bugs out. Only one phone line works at all. If I didn't understand TCP/IP, I don't think the tech would have been so forth coming with all the details. We talked it out and I had him reset some stuff for me :) On a positive note, I am able to get faster downloads. Go figure..."

Jim Coile asks Charles:

"So are you saying your former problems have been ironed out and you're up and running to your satisfaction? I ask because I've also been having random problems with my server and am considering moving to another server. Also seems reluctant to set me up an additional trial account so I can attempt to get Sting going. Are you now in a position to recommend your current server using a PPP setup? Thanks in advance for any info."

Charles replies to Jim:

"What’s up? Well, If there is one thing I’ve learned, it’s that no ISP is perfect. Telebyte.com, the ISP I was talking about, does work very well now. JPS.net is good (cheaper), but their news feed is inferior to Telebyte. I setup a fellow to Eskimo.com and they seem to be good on all accounts also. No matter how you go, ISP’s here don’t know shee-ot about Atari’s, so we are on our own. Hell, some don’t even know a Mac from a "Rat Pack". I can connect to any ISP with STinG/ppp. So, it’s a judge- ment call depending what your needs are. Sooner or later, any ISP will disappoint you as here in the USA they change their setup’s. That’s why I have two of’em. I do have some sympathy for them as they battle for their commercial lives... I’m a bit partial to Telebyte because it was my first ISP. No busy signals or anything like that. $20/month if you buy 3 months service at a time. STinG/ppp works with them all, no exceptions. As you know, in the Seattle area, they are many to choose from. I’ll help out no matter who you try. IMHO, I always tell’em I have an Atari/Falcon and ask for a guarantee that if the service isn’t satisfactory, I want my money back <grin>. If they don’t agree to that, forget them... I’ve been involved in a few "Net Wars" lately, so I’m a bit jaded. I’m the infamous lr2 aka lone ranger deuce <g>. ^ ^ ^^^^^ Sometimes you only learn things when you push the limits. Nice to here from you again. <grin>"

Bill Platt adds this little tidbit of info:

"Find an ISP that supports PPP and PAP as well as assigning dynamic dns and dynamic IP addresses. Bellsouth.net has this. The only thing I need in my configuration files besides the TTL and techie stuff is my user name and password. I deleted out the IP address and the DNS and hostname. The only thing in my dial,scr is the phone number, user name and password. When I first tried to get connected to bellsouth, I had fits trying to get STing configured. Then I came up with the idea, give the script as little info as possible qand add more as needed. The result, name, number and password are all that’s needed."

Meanwhile, Mike Saeger posts:

"Recently I noticed that on Yahoo! Cab does not display the header graphic. All I get is the outline of a box. Is there something on this page that is not supported by Cab?"

Bill Platt tells Mike:

"It could be *.PNG graphics, or if you have your advertising filter set, they may have changed the name of the file to something getting screened out by the filter. I’m glad it isn’t there, it makes yahoo a lot faster. I’ve already seen the logo and don’t need to see it again."

Ronald Hall tells Bill:

"I don’t think its CAB at all. I had the same problem when I was using CAB and STing together with the CAB-for-STik/STing OVL file. Now that I have switched to Mint, and am using the CAB-for-Mint OVL file, the graphic for Yahoo comes in just fine (faster, too). So its MHO that its not STing or CAB but the OVL file."

David Moore tells Ronald and Mike:

"I do beleive that CAB does not support a background graphic in a table column such as <table border="0"><tr><td background="Yourpicture.gif"></td></tr></table> I have written several of my web pages like above and have checked them with several browsers and all of them except CAB would display the above. Does anyone know just which TAGS are supported by CAB and version of HTML? Please do not confuse the above background graphics with a graphic in a table such as below <table border="0"><tr><td><imc src="yourpicture.gif" alt="My Mugg"></td></tr></table>"

Alexander Clauss, the author of CAB, tells everyone:

"This is not part of any HTML standard. CAB supports HTML 3.2."

Gareth Metford posts:

"I use my 1040STE for Cubase sequencing only (I use my PC for recording and I don’t want to compromise MIDI timing so I’m sticking to the ST for the time being). I just upgraded it to 4Mb RAM (cost me GBP4 via a www seller: much better than the GBP90 System Solutions are charging!) and am now interested in seeing if I can improve the computer in some other ways too, to make sequencing easier. However, I don’t want to spend much money. I understand that there is a program called NVDI available for speeding up screen displays - can anyone tell me how well this works and which version I should get (version 5 enhancements seem to be all about printing, which I’m not interested in). Also, can anyone tell me how easy it is to add an external HD to the ST? And, finally, I really need a new case for mine - can anyone recommend any alternative cases (you can get Mega ST cases from System Solutions - are these any good? Is it easy to change the case? Do you have to buy another keyboard?). Or alternatively, can anyone recommend a source for a new STE case? Oh yeah, I HAVE to find a way to speed up that dratted mouse pointer! Any help on any of this would be much appreciated!"

Clayton Murray tells Gareth:

"For screen redraws and and a faster mousie try Warp 9. I use it and am very pleased with it’s faster screen redraws and the mouse accelerater is nicely configurable. I’m using it now on my Falcon, but I also had it on my ST where it made a nice improvement. You can hook up an external SCSI unit to your ST with an adaptor by ICD called the Link. There are a few versions out. Very simple to do."

Bill Platt adds:

"You can get the LINK from ICD and connect about anything SCSI to it. Don't get any drives from Syquest cause they are out of business, and Iomega products suck. You can call the Mac Zone and get an external 2 gig SCSI for under 200 USD. There is no easy way to put any internal drive into the ST, I think the TUS in england has a kit though. Before you spend any money, check out the guy in this NG selling a Falcon for 350 dollars. I believe it already hads a HD and 14 megs of RAM. Since the Link will cost you 100 usd, and a external HD 200 usd, for 50 USDF more you get 10 extra megs of ram, a 16 mhz processor and a 32 MHZ DSP chip. You can use this machine for D2D recording. Considering the Falcon runs at 4 mips, and the ST at 1/4 mip's you may want to check this out. The Falcon is compatable with most ST programs and there are ST emulation programs that make about 90% compatable. On top of this you also get a 640x480x256 color display istead of a 640x400 mono display. You can even surf the net and play doom. It'll cost close to 1000 USD to bring the ST up to the Falcon's spec. 350 dollars for the falcon is a good deal."

** Just as a footnote, folks... SyQuest is NOT out of business. They have filed for bankruptcy. There is a world of difference. Syquest has been sold.... Look for the new owners to incorporate their product line into the new owner's product line. Announcements soon.

Nick Bales adds:

"Warp9 is commercial software, and no longer supported. Even at the time, it was a bit slower than NVDI, which has got even faster with later releases."

Richard Watson posts:

"I am a relative newcomer and have set up my system with the software pack from Zetnet and I have the following problem. I have a 4meg STE with Veloce 2meg running Magic 5.11 and NVDI 4.11. I use Stik and CAB 2.5 and I can only get CAB running with the OVL (file size 46041 bytes, dated 01-12-96) supplied with CAB 1.5. When I try and access any of the Cyberstrider sites I get the page saying I am using an old browser. Denesh suggested I try the later versions of CAB_OVL.

However I have tried the OVL supplied by zetnet and ver 1.2904 downloaded (both 33693 bytes) from Anthill Industries but when I use these I get the 'Network is down Error 312' message and the file is not found althought the modem is still connected. I have tried running the system without Veloce, but the problem still persists. I don't seem to have any problems with Newsie. I have spoken to Schuiming at Systems Solutions but he does not know why this is happening.

Thank you to Trevor Spencer and Robert Goldsmith from the Zetnet Atarians List for responding to my cry for help there. I have tried reloading and

using the OVL that came with 2.5, and the latest Beta from Anthill and altering the config file, all without success and I am not using a proxy. The only OVL that works is the one with CAB 1.5. What next? Is it a problem in the Auto folder? should I go onto STing?

Should I try the 2.7 demo? Any suggestions gratefully received."

Tony Paxton tells Richard:

"I have a better suggestion that I thought Danny had already implimented.. and that is to get rid of those scripts.. Hey Danny.. theres no need for them mate... I thought you had lost them?"

Bill Platt adds:

"Do not use the cab.ovl 1.2904 it is very buggy. Try an earlier or later version."

Richard tells Bill and Tony:

"Many thanks to those who responded to my earlier plea for help. I have now got CAB 2.7 demo (suggested by Denesh and Trevor Spencer) working with CAB_OVL ver 1.3011 beta (suggested by William Platt) I have also downloaded STinG which I shall give a try when I have time. For some reason it seems very stable if I have connected and used NEWSIE first, otherwise it seems less stable. This may, of course, be due to the clumsy way I blunder around the Internet! I have tried reloading CAB 2.5 and altering the config file and different OVL’s but this still will not work. Perhaps STinG is the answer to this. Hopefully 2.7 will be available soon. It seems from all the comments that it may just be one of those quirks that affects my set up for no apparent reason, but as a newcomer to the net, I am already convinced of it’s usefullness."

Well folks, that’s all for this week. Again, I hope your Thanksgiving was a happy, healthy, and safe one. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

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EDITORIAL QUICKIES

CRIME PREVENTION

The Ann Arbor News crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan at 7:50am, flashed a gun and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn’t open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren’t available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

NOW... YOU TELL ME!

An old lady came into her doctor’s office and confessed to an embarrassing problem. "I fart all the time, Doctor Blake, but they’re soundless, and they have no odor. In fact, since I’ve been here, I’ve farted no less than twenty times. What can I do?" "Here’s a prescription, Mrs. Jacobson. Take these pills three times a day for seven days and come back and see me in a week."

The next week, an upset Mrs. Jacobson marched into Dr. Blake’s office. "Doctor, I don’t know what was in those pills, but the problem is worse! I’m farting just as much, and they’re still soundless, but now they smell

terrible! What do you have to say for yourself?"

"Calm down, Mrs. Jacobson," said the doctor soothingly. "Now that we've fixed your sinuses, we'll work on your hearing."

John Hole/WUGNET [Enfield,Middlesex,UK]

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STReport "YOUR INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE" November 27, 1998
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